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Corporate Social Responsibility of Chinese SOEs in Transnational Context: The Case of China National Petroleum Corporation

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis here submitted is original and represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature_____

Date_____

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ABSTRACT

This study adopts China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) as a case to analyze its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in transnational context. It first gives a comprehensive introduction to the significance and developmental trajectory of CSR in China to set up the research context. Next, it critically adopts Ditlev-Simonsen and Wenstop's (2011) taxonomy of ethics rhetoric to analyze the ethical commitment and moral reasoning entailed in CNPC's CSR reports in the consecutive years of 2008-2012, and contextualizes CNPC's ethical disposition by comparing CNPC's CSR performance with its western counterparts Royal Dutch Shell in the same period. The comparison also helps to shed lights on the convergence and divergence of Chinese and western CSR practiced transnationally.

The findings reveal that compared with Shell's ethics rhetoric deployed in its CSR communications, which focuses more on human rights and governance issues like anti-corruption and transparency, CNPC invokes more development related issues like fulfilling the basic needs of the local people. Although they all mainly base their ethics rhetoric on perspectives of benefit (B) and ethos (E), their underlying ethical reasoning is rather different. Besides, since Detlev-Simonsen and Wenstop's framework follows a dominant business ethics approach, it is inadequate in analyzing ethics rhetoric from the perspective of care and relationship, an

emerging, yet still marginal business ethics that has largely been ignored in CSR research. This study suggests that future studies can involve more comparative analyses, or examine more into the ethical aspects of CSR discourses other than corporate reports, especially from the "care and relationship" perspective.

Key words**:** CSR; central state-owned enterprise (CSOEs); CNPC; China; oil and gas industry; rhetoric; ethics



Table of Contents

DECLARATION I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS II

ABSTRACT III

1.Introduction 1

2.Research Background and Significance 4

2.1 The Significance of Adopting CSR in General 4

2.2 The Predicament of Adopting CSR in Developing Countries 5

3. Literature Review 8

3.1 The Emergence and Evolution of CSR 8

3.2 CSR and Public Relations 12

3.3 CSR and Globalization 15

3.4 CSR Reporting 17

3.5 The Developmental Trajectory of CSR in China 19

3.6 The Importance of Adopting CSR in the Oil and Gas Industry 28

3.7 China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Its CSR 32

3.7.1 Background information of CNPC 32

3.7.2 CSR reporting by CNPC 34

4. Theoretical Framework 36

4.1 Ethical Approach to CSR 36

4.2 The CSR Taxonomy of Ethics Rhetorical Strategies Proposed by Ditlev-Simonsen and Wenstop 37

4.3 Research Questions 40

5. Methodology 41

5.1 Thematic Analysis 41

5.2 Rhetoric Analysis 44

6. Findings.....46
6.1 CSR of CNPC and Royal Dutch Shell..... 46
6.1.1 A thematic comparison on CSR programs..... 47
6.1.2 A comparison of ethics rhetoric between CNPC and Shell..... 49
6.2 The Ethical Commitment in CNPC's CSR Reports..... 54
6.2.1 Environmental records..... 54
6.2.2 Corruption and revenue transparency..... 56
6.2.3 Labor relations..... 59
6.2.4 Philanthropy and social programs..... 62
7. Conclusions and Limitations.....67
8. Bibliography.....70
9. Appendix.....86

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